

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2375
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

S E C R E T JIDDA 4451

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, PINR, TC, IR
SUBJECT: INTERNAL TENSION IN THE UAE

REF: (A) TEHRAN 5512 (B) ABU DHABI 1666

1. EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICER DISCUSSED UAE INTERNAL SITUATION WITH ISMAIL AL-AHURA, DIRECTOR OF ARABIAN PENINSULA AFFAIRS AT MFA. AL-SHURA SAID THAT SAUDI ARABIA WOULD CONSIDER BREAK-UP OF FEDERATION DISASTROUS EVENT WHICH WOULD CREATE NUMEROUS OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUTSIDE MEDDLING. HE SAID THAT SAUDIS HAD REPEATEDLY URGED UAE RULERS TO COOPERATE AND THAT BOTH PRINCE FAHD AND KING KHALID, IN ORIGINAL VISITS TO UAE IN 1975 AND 1976 HAD SPOLEN VERY BLUNTLY TO ASSEMBLED SHEIKHS. AL-SHURA NOTED THAT DURING THEIR RECENT VISITS TO SAUDI ARABIA INDIVIDUAL SHEIKHS HAVE BEEN PRESENTING THEIR OWN CASES AND THAT SAUDI GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN SENT AWAY WITH SOOTHING WORDS AND REASSURANCES. AL-SHURA SAID THAT IN HIS PERSONAL OPINION SHEIKHS SHOULD
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RECEIVE LESS REASSURANCE AND MORE HARD ADVICE.

2. AL-SHURA REFUSED TO TAKE SIDES IN ABU DHABI-DUBAI DISPUTE. ON THE CONTRARY, HIS COMMENTS INDICATED SYMPATHY WITH BOTH SIDES: HE COULD SYMPATHIZE WITH ZAYID'S INSTINCTIVE "BEDOUIN" GENEROSITY AND AT SAME TIME UNDERSTAND HOW HIS ACTIONS WOULD DISTURB SHEIKH RASHID. AL-

SHURA SAID THAT SAUDI INFLUENCE IN UAE WAS LIMITED, AND NOTED THAT EARLIER BLUNT WORDS OF FAHD AND KHALID APPEAR TO HAVE HAD NO EFFECT. HE SAID, "IF WE COULD NOT STOP KUWAIT FROM ESTABLISHING RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNIST COUNTRIES AND FROM BUYING ARMS THERE, AN WE PERSUADE THE SHEIKHS OF THE UAE TO COOPERATE?"

3. FYI: WE ARE NOT REALLY SURPRISED AT SANANDAJI'S STATEMENTS NOTED REF A: PREVIOUS ACQUAINTANCE HAD REVEALED HIM TO BE MAN OF LIMITED UNDERSTANDING, ESPECIALLY WHERE ARABS ARE CONCERNED. IRANIANS HAVE BEEN SPREADING STORY OF SUWAIDI'S COLLUSION WITH IRAQIS FOR YEARS. MOST OF THESE STORIES APPEAR TO HAVE COME FROM THE SAVAK AGENTS AT DUBAI IRANIAN HOSPITAL. ACCORDING TO ONE VERSION OF THIS STORY, SPREAD IN 1976 BY THE NOTORIOUSLY UNRELIABLE SHEIKH ABDULLAH GALADARI, SUWAIDI WAS PART OF A PRO-IRAQI "GANG OF FOUR" INCLUDING HAMOUDAH BIN ALI, OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR.

4. QUITE BY CHANCE EMBOFF HAD OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS UAE MATTER WITH SENIOR THIRD COUNTRY DIPLOMAT WHO HAD TAKEN SUBJECT UP WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER. DEPUTY EXPRESSED SAG'S CONCERN AND NOTED THAT SAG HAD PUT MATTER OF SAUDI INTEREST IN UAE STABILITY BEFORE THAT GOVERNMENT AND WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO. END FYI.

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